

REMARKS

This preliminary amendment is provided as part of a request for continued examination. All of claims 1-13 are provided for consideration at this time. Each of the objections and rejections provided in the May 13, 2003, Office Action will be specifically addressed in this Preliminary Amendment.

Drawings

A proposed drawing correction is provided with Figure 1 which shifts the perpendicular axes from as originally provided in Figure 1 to the left so that they are shown more clearly extending through the first and second face plates 12,14. This is what was believed to be represented by the axes 38,40 as originally drawn. Nevertheless, this amendment is not believed to add new matter and should overcome the objection provided by the Examiner. The perpendicularity of the axes 38,40 to the faceplates 12,14 is discussed in the specification as originally filed on page 5, line 4 in paragraph number 16.

35 USC § 112 Objections

The Examiner has correctly observed that in claim 1, lines 11 and 12-13, the phrase "said at least one first wall portion" and "and the at least one first wall portion" lack proper antecedent bases. The applicant inadvertently omitted the insertion of the word "first" between "one" and "wall" in line 10. The amendment to claim 11 provides this "first" term to correct the antecedent bases issue as it relates to claim 1 which affects all the claims 1-13.

Secondly, in claim 12 the phrase "the first and second wall" should have been "the first and second wall portions" which correctly addresses the antecedent basis issue addressed by the Examiner that relates to that claim as well.

Accordingly, the claims are now believed to be in proper format for further examination under 35 USC § 112.

Elected Species

The Applicant initially elected the species of claims 1, 3, 6-8, 10, and 12. This election is hereby reaffirmed with traverse. Claims 1, 3, 6-8 and 12 are directed to the species illustrated in Figure 1 while claims 2, 4-5, 9, 11 and 13 are directed to the various other embodiments shown in Figures 2-4. Nevertheless, the other embodiments have been addressed with claims which depend from claim 1. If generic claim 1 is deemed to be allowable, then further examination the other species of claims 2, 4-5, 9, and 11 would be appropriate. Cancellation of these other claims would not be appropriate at this juncture.

35 USC § 102 Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6-8, 10 and 12 over Ray

Claims 1, 3, 6-8, 10 and 12 were rejected as being anticipated by Ray, U.S. Statutory Invention Registration No. H1621. Ray shows a sandwich panel having a plurality of parallel strips that have wall portions obliquely angled relative to the top and bottom panels along the length of the strips illustrated as diagonally extended segments 36. It is important to observe that the diagonally extended segments 36 are portions angled along the length of the strips and not along the width of the strips (i.e., lines extending perpendicularly to the length through the width of the strips 24 do not intersect either of the top or the bottom panels 16,20).

As amended, claim 1 requires the length of the ribbons be substantially longer than the width of the ribbon. This clarifies the limitation that the at least one wall portions of the plurality of the ribbons is obliquely angled along the width of the ribbon relative to a perpendicular first axis extending through the panels. It is important to remember that the width is required in the claim to extend continuously between the first face plate and the

second face plate. The width of the diagonally extend segments 36 in Ray does not meet this limitation. In fact, the width only contacts one panel at a time at either end of the segments 36, and does not ever extend continuously between both top and bottom panels.

After reviewing the original claim language, it is easier to understand how the confusion has been created between the structure the applicant believed to be claiming, and how the claims were being interpreted by the Examiner.

As provided by the amendment to claim 1, the first wall portions extend continuously from the first face plate to the second face. Furthermore, the lengths of the ribbons are required to be substantially longer than the width of the ribbons. Accordingly, this amendment overcomes the rationale of the parts 36 and 38 of Ray meeting the claim limitations, since the strips 24 of Ray are not obliquely angled along their width relative to a first perpendicular access as is now claimed by the amendment (only along portions of their length). The width direction is perpendicular to the length direction and just because the segments along the length direction is obliquely angled, no segment in Ray meets the obliquely angled along the width limitation. These directional limitation differences are somewhat analogous to the difference between pitch and roll to an aircraft.

35 USC § 102 Rejection over Yancy

The rejection of claims 1, 3, 6-8, 10 and 12 as anticipated by Yancy, U.S. Patent No. 3,869,778 has also been affected by the enclosed amendment.. Yancy is not significantly different in structure than Ray as it relates to the structure of the ribbons. Specifically, part 78 is obliquely angled along the length of the ribbon and not along the width of the ribbon as has been clarified to the amendment to claim 1. Accordingly, Yancy also fails to meet the new claim 1 limitation as has been clarified relative to claim 1.

35 USC § 102 Rejection over White

Claims 1, 3, 6-8, 10 and 12 have also been rejected under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by White et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,398,889. Figures 4-8 show the complicated structure of a liner 11. As stated in the Summary of the Invention, "Liners are provided for use in aircraft to provide predetermined amounts of separation between the aircraft fuselage skin and the insulation blankets which are installed in the aircraft to reduce heat loss. The liners are effective for minimizing the absorption of condensate by the insulation blankets and for facilitating the management of the flow of condensate along the skin of the aircraft to the bilge for subsequent removal." (Col. 2, lines 66 – Col. 3, line 5) Furthermore, as stated in the detailed description of the preferred embodiment in columns 5 and 6: "The liners are constructed having a plurality of openings formed therethrough. The openings provide a path of condensate formed on the insulation blanket side of the liner or within the insulation blanket itself to flow to the fuselage side of the liner where it flows downwardly along the fuselage skin for collection in the bilge for subsequent removal from the aircraft. **A liner that does not have such openings is undesirable** because the condensate formed at or within the insulation blankets is not allowed to drain from the blankets to the bilge but rather, remains stored within the blankets trapped between the blanket and liner." (emphasis added) (Column 5, line 66-Column 6, line 9)

As can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 of the White Patent, it is important to observe that openings 54 prevent the blanket and skin standoffs 36,38 from extending continuously along the width from the top to the bottom between panels (such as blanket 38 and skin 30). As

explained in the detailed description of the preferred embodiment, these openings are necessary to direct condensate.


Since condensate is not a contemplated problem of the claimed invention, this ability is not claimed or desired. Furthermore, it appears that the liner 11 of the White disclosure is a single sheet of material stamped into the desired shape (see column 5, lines 39-57). It is believed to be extremely difficult if not impossible to form the claimed invention in that manner since the plurality ribbons are both spaced apart and extend continuously along the width from the first plate to the second plate.

Conclusion

This response is believed to be a complete response to the Office Action dated May 13, 2003. Accordingly, allowance of claims 1-13 are respectfully requested at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: August 12, 2003

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AUG 14 2003

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